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TOR for the review state the primacy of “Australian Interest” in reducing poverty and achieve sustainable development in the recipient countries needs to be critically examined, reflects badly on our efforts in helping countries achieve MDGs.

In the Scope of the audit it has to keep into consideration short-term goals that feed into long-term benefits for communities in low and middle-income countries. Aid evaluations need to include the input of sectors where aid has been spent, it’s long-term development investment and cannot be viewed from a top down lens only. We continue to focus how programs are identified and projects delivered and managed, do these communities as stakeholders recognise benefits from such aid programs, we continue to ignore them.

Aid spent on education programs aimed at enhancing the capacity of the recipient countries, communities and organisation need to be re-examined. Anecdotal evidence from South Asia especially Pakistan suggests otherwise, we are depriving public sector (in particular) from their existing capacity as aid-scholarship recipients tend to pursue different careers upon completion of their program further reducing the institutional capacity of the host country/organisation. This has to be re-examined carefully and we need some longitudinal data to examine the benefits (if any) of funding such programs.

Aid effectiveness needs to include both the donors as well as the recipients, our primary focus continues to be the donors, it has not worked in other contexts (Europe and North America), we need to be more inclusive and extrovert in examining how Australian aid is viewed by recipients /stakeholders.